

2007 Annual Report

City of Huntington Beach Planning Department





City of Huntington Beach Planning Department Mission Statement

To develop a shared vision of how a team works together effectively by being professional, respectful, responsible, understanding and positive to improve the quality of customer service.

Director's Message

On behalf of City of Huntington Beach Planning Department staff, I am pleased to present the Department's 2007 Annual Report. This document highlights the activities of the Huntington Beach Planning Department for calendar year 2007.

Over the past couple of years, the City Departments involved in development have been focusing on enhancing customer service and improving the efficiency of the development review process. Recent improvements in the Planning Department include reducing some fees for some high frequency applications, assigning a project planner to shepherd an application from start to finish, improving communications via the Department website, tracking wait time at the public counter with the goal of serving 85 percent of customers within 15 minutes, and utilizing the Development Assistance Team on more complex projects to improve interdepartmental communications.

2007 has been a busy year for development in the City of Huntington Beach. In 2007, the Department completed the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the new Senior Center, recorded the first phase of the Brightwater annexation, and held 4 public workshops on the Beach Boulevard and Edinger Corridor Study, among many other projects large and small. The Department was also instrumental in the adoption of the City's inclusionary housing ordinance, completing adoption of the density bonus Zoning Text Amendments and receiving Coastal Commission approval of the Local Coastal Program Amendment for Timeshares. Other projects such as the Strand and Pacific City are in the midst of construction. Projects that will shape the City of Huntington Beach for years to come such as The Village at Bella Terra and The Ripcurl are in their infancy. This report provides a background on the Planning Department and entitlement process for these and other projects, as well as an insight into the daily activities of the Department.

Although this publication highlights the Planning Department's activities, I want to acknowledge the contributions of all City Departments that are involved in the review of projects, especially Building & Safety, Community Services, Economic Development, Fire, Police and Public Works for their integral role in the development process. I also want to thank the City Administrator, and subsequently, Interim City Administrator, and their staff for providing direction to the Department and the City Attorney for legal guidance. Likewise, I want to express my gratitude to each member of the Planning Commission, Design Review Board and Environmental Board for making the time to serve the residents of Huntington Beach as commissioners and board members. Finally, I want to acknowledge the City Council for their support of the Department and service to the City.

I hope that you find this report to be informative.

Sincerely,

Scott Hess, AICP
Director of Planning

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ABOUT PLANNING

The Planning Department is responsible for managing the orderly development and use of land in the City. This involves implementing California State law for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive General Plan and the corresponding Zoning Code, as well as reviewing and processing applications for various development projects based upon those documents.

Successful urban planning considers local identity, respect for natural, artistic and historic heritage, an understanding of the "urban grain" or "townscape," pedestrians and other modes of traffic, utilities and natural hazards, such as flood zones. Planners are important in managing the growth of cities, applying tools like zoning to manage the uses of land, and environmental review to mitigate the impacts of development on the community.

Planning is a broad discipline of policy planning, development review and zoning code enforcement. At its most basic level, City Planning implements California State law for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive General Plan and the corresponding Zoning Code as well as reviewing and processing applications for various development projects based upon these documents. Traditional planning departments contain two or three separate divisions to perform these functions. The City of Huntington Beach Planning Department follows this traditional model and is comprised of the following divisions:

- *Advance Planning*, which maintains the General Plan, various long-term goals, long-term projects, and policy documents and conducts environmental review;
- *Current Planning*, which reviews and processes development applications according to the General Plan and Zoning Code;
- *Code Enforcement/Neighborhood Preservation*, Code Enforcement enforces municipal codes pertaining to substandard housing, property maintenance and land-use in an effort to upgrade residential properties to the standards set forth in the Uniform Housing Code; Neighborhood Preservation is a preventative approach focusing on education and community partnerships to help communities to address local conditions and to improve the quality of life.

PUBLIC JUDICIAL BODIES

1. The City Council

The City Council is comprised of seven members who are elected by the citizens of Huntington Beach to a four-year term. Most planning projects acted upon by the City Council are either appeals of a Planning Commission decision or legislative changes that are automatically forwarded from the Planning Commission to the City Council for final action.



Examples of legislative changes include general plan amendments, zoning map and zoning text amendments, and precise plans of street alignments. City Council action on any project is final, unless the project is located in the appealable area of the Coastal Zone. In such a case the project may be appealed to the California Coastal Commission for final determination.

The City Council meets every first and third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers building at the City Hall complex. The City Administrator, City Attorney and all department heads attend City Council meetings. These meetings are also televised live on HBTv Channel 3.

2007 City Council Members were:

- Gil Coerper, Mayor
- Debbie Cook, Mayor Pro Tem
- Joe Carchio
- Keith Bohr
- Cathy Green
- Don Hansen
- Jill Hardy

2. The Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is comprised of seven members who are appointed by the City Council members. Each City Council member appoints one commissioner to this quasi-judicial body that is empowered by State law and the City Council.

The Planning Commission meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Study sessions are frequently held at 5:15 p.m. prior to the meeting. The Planning Commission study session is open to public attendance but is not a public hearing. The Planning Commission follows Roberts Rules of Order and their own By-Laws. Support staff to the Planning Commission includes the Planning Director (or an appointee) who serves as the Secretary to the Commission, a Deputy City Attorney serving as legal counsel, and various

City staff members from the Planning Department, Public Works Department, and Fire Department. The meetings are televised live on local cable HBTv Channel 3.

Projects typically acted upon by the Planning Commission are major development proposals, tentative tract maps, zoning map amendments, zoning text amendments, general plan amendments, and various similar applications. In reviewing a project, the project planner consults with various City departments as well as the appropriate regional and state agencies. Environmental assessments are conducted concurrently with each project analysis. The review process for a Planning Commission item normally requires four to six months.

2007 Planning Commission
Members were

- John Scandura, Chair
- Tom Livengood, Vice Chair
- Devin Dwyer
- Blair Farley
- Joe Shaw
- Elizabeth Shier-Burnett
- Fred Speaker

In 2007, the Planning Commission held 22 regular meetings and one workshop.



Planning Commission Statistics

Study Session Items: 52

Projects Reviewed: 28

3. The Zoning Administrator

The Zoning Administrator is a senior staff planner appointed by the Planning Director. Mary Beth Broeren, Principal Planner, was the Zoning Administrator during this time period. Current Planning staff is assigned to review projects and make recommendations for approval, revision, or denial as appropriate. Zoning Administrator meetings are held Wednesday afternoons at 1:30 p.m.

Projects typically acted upon by the Zoning Administrator are small multi-family developments, single-family construction in the Coastal Zone, commercial and industrial developments; tentative parcel maps, and minor variances. Any required environmental assessment is conducted concurrent with the planning analysis. The review process normally takes two to three months before an application is acted upon by the Zoning Administrator for review.

2007 Zoning Administrator Statistics

Projects Reviewed: 71

4. The Design Review Board

The Design Review Board reviews development proposals for their aesthetic value, architectural style, and landscape to ensure a quality physical design. The Board reviews all projects in redevelopment zones, all City specific plans (such as the downtown area), and other areas designated by the City Council. The entire length of Beach Boulevard is a recent example of such a designated area. The Design Review Board acts in both an advisory capacity to the City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator and City staff, as well as a final decision making body. The Design Review Board generally meets on the second Thursday of each month and is composed of five members appointed by the City Council consisting of two City residents, one Planning Commissioner, a representative from the Department of Public Works, and a representative from the Planning Department.

2007 Design Review Board Statistics

Projects Reviewed: 38

5. The Environmental Assessment Committee

The Environmental Assessment Committee is composed of one staff member from Planning, Public Works and the City Attorney's office. Environmental assessment checklists are submitted for projects that are not exempt according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and require further analysis. After discussing impacts and mitigation measures, the Committee makes recommendations regarding the necessity of the preparation and advertisement of an Environmental Impact Report, Mitigated Negative Declaration or Negative Declaration for a project. The Environmental Assessment Committee typically examines a project very early in the process so that the appropriate CEQA public review period can be advertised prior to action by the decision-making body. The committee meets on an as-needed basis.



Environmental Assessment Committee Statistics

Projects Reviewed: 8

6. The Subdivision Committee

State Law and the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance establish the Subdivision Committee. Its membership consists of three Planning Commissioners and a representative from the Fire,

Public Works, and Planning Departments. The Subdivision Committee reviews each tentative map for compliance with the Subdivision Map Act as well as City standards and policies. The Committee is advisory to the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission and City Council, and conducts its review prior to final action by the decision-making body. Meetings are held on an as-needed basis.

7. Environmental Board

The Environmental Board is a volunteer board consisting of nine residents appointed by the City Council that studies the environment of the City and investigates all actual and potential threats to a clean environment for the City and its inhabitants. The Board meets the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

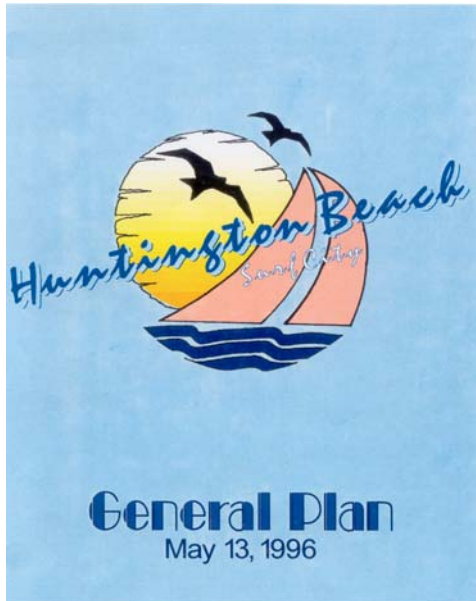
8. Additional Committees

Apart from the decision-making and advisory bodies described above, Planning staff serves as liaisons to a variety of other boards and committees. These groups are typically advisory to the Planning Commission and City Council regarding single-issue topics. Others are County or regionally sponsored groups geared toward larger regional issues. In 2007, Planning staff interacted with the following groups:

- Development Assistance Team
- Development Services Team
- Downtown City Council Subcommittee
- Economic Development Committee
- Executive Team
- NESI Ad-Hoc Committee
- Orange County Council of Governments
- School District/City Council Issues Subcommittee
- Public Nuisance Task Force (Code Enforcement)
- Waterways and Beaches Committee (Code Enforcement)
- Citywide Water Quality Subcommittee
- Oakview Task Force (Code Enforcement)
- Affordable Housing Ad Hoc City Council Committee

PLANNING OVERVIEW

1. The General Plan



California State law requires that each city prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan for its future development. State law requires that the day-to-day decisions of a city follow logically from and be consistent with the General Plan. However, cities can apply flexibility and local control to best determine the specific needs of the community and the populace.

The General Plan is intended to be a far-reaching policy document defining how the city perceives itself now and in the future. The General Plan is intended to be a roadmap for a city, providing a framework for zoning and entitlement standards. In this regard, the General Plan constitutes an important medium through which the Planning Department and the various Boards, Commissions and Councils affect social, economic and physical change.

2. The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance

The purpose of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance (ZSO) is to implement the goals and visions of the General Plan. ZSO implementation occurs in many forms, including regulations for density limits, setback standards, landscaping provisions, parking requirements, building square footage to parcel size ratios (floor area ratios) and provisions for creation of new building sites.

While the ZSO allows certain development types, others are required to undergo entitlement approval from one of the public judicial bodies, such as the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission. This development review process provides an opportunity for the public as well as the decision-making bodies to approve, alter, or deny a project.

Specific Plans

The purpose of a Specific Plan is to provide for the orderly development and improvement of a defined area in the City. The Specific Plan is established to guide the development of an area that is characterized by its unique location, geographic features, land uses and ownership patterns.

The Specific Plan becomes existing zoning policy, development standards and descriptive maps for that area. Additionally, the Specific Plan provides for creativity at the individual project level, and at the same time ensures that developments will ultimately combine to create a cohesive community. Where the Specific Plans are silent, the Huntington Beach Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance will govern.

The City of Huntington Beach has 14 adopted Specific Plans and is in the process of preparing additional specific plans.

3. Planning in a Regional Context

Regional Planning has grown in significance as a policy setting focus. The entire planning process now occurs within a continually changing environment encompassing the city and the region to which it belongs. Cities are increasingly required by law to coordinate with surrounding cities and counties and to participate in plans that have regional, as well as local goals. A city may work with Federal, State, and/or county agencies (such as CalTrans or Orange County Transportation Authority) to create solutions for issues having regional importance, such as traffic. The planning process will continue to evolve as cities assess and assert their roles in the regional planning process.

4. The Entitlement Process

Processing development applications for entitlements is one of the principle responsibilities of the Planning Department. Development may be requested on a small scale by a homeowner wishing to make minor building or fence modifications, or on a large scale by a developer wishing to master plan a project of several acres. The development entitlement process distinguishes between various levels of development requests and applies the appropriate level of public notification and response, review and analysis.

Most development requests begin with the submittal of plans at the zoning counter. Zoning counter personnel may approve minor requests such as room additions, block walls, patio covers or similar projects when the proposed project meets the criteria of the ZSO. Major projects or those requiring discretionary entitlements are submitted at the zoning counter and processed for action by a public judicial body, as determined by the ZSO.

Most projects approved at any level of the City are appealable to the next higher level of discretionary authority. Projects acted upon by the Zoning Administrator are appealable to the Planning Commission and projects acted upon by the Planning Commission are appealable to the City Council.

Planning Staff

The Planning Department is comprised of 29 professional staff members (see organizational chart). The Department is under the leadership of Director of Planning Scott Hess, who reports to Deputy City Administrator Bob Hall. The Department is composed of three divisions: Current Planning, Advance Planning and Code Enforcement.

A. Current Planning

The Current Planning Division is primarily responsible for reviewing and analyzing planning and environmental aspects of proposed development projects. Minor projects such as conforming room additions, patio covers and fences are approved at the zoning counter. More complex projects typically are processed through either the Zoning Administrator or the Planning Commission, with some projects going to the City Council only on appeal. Current

Planning applications consist primarily of conditional use permits, tentative parcel and tract maps, variances, coastal development permits, sign code exceptions, planned sign programs, and applications requiring approval of the Design Review Board.

As a project planner reviews and analyzes an application, meetings are held between the applicant, Planning staff and other City departments to address issues. By the time a project reaches the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission, the majority of issues have been resolved and the project may have been through some minor revisions.

B. Advance Planning

The Advance Planning Division is responsible for maintaining the General Plan, processing General Plan amendment requests, zone changes, code amendments, environmental documents, precise plan of street alignments, and preparing various special studies of public policy nature. Advance Planning is typically involved in processing legislative and policy oriented projects to the Planning Commission and City Council, rather than development projects.

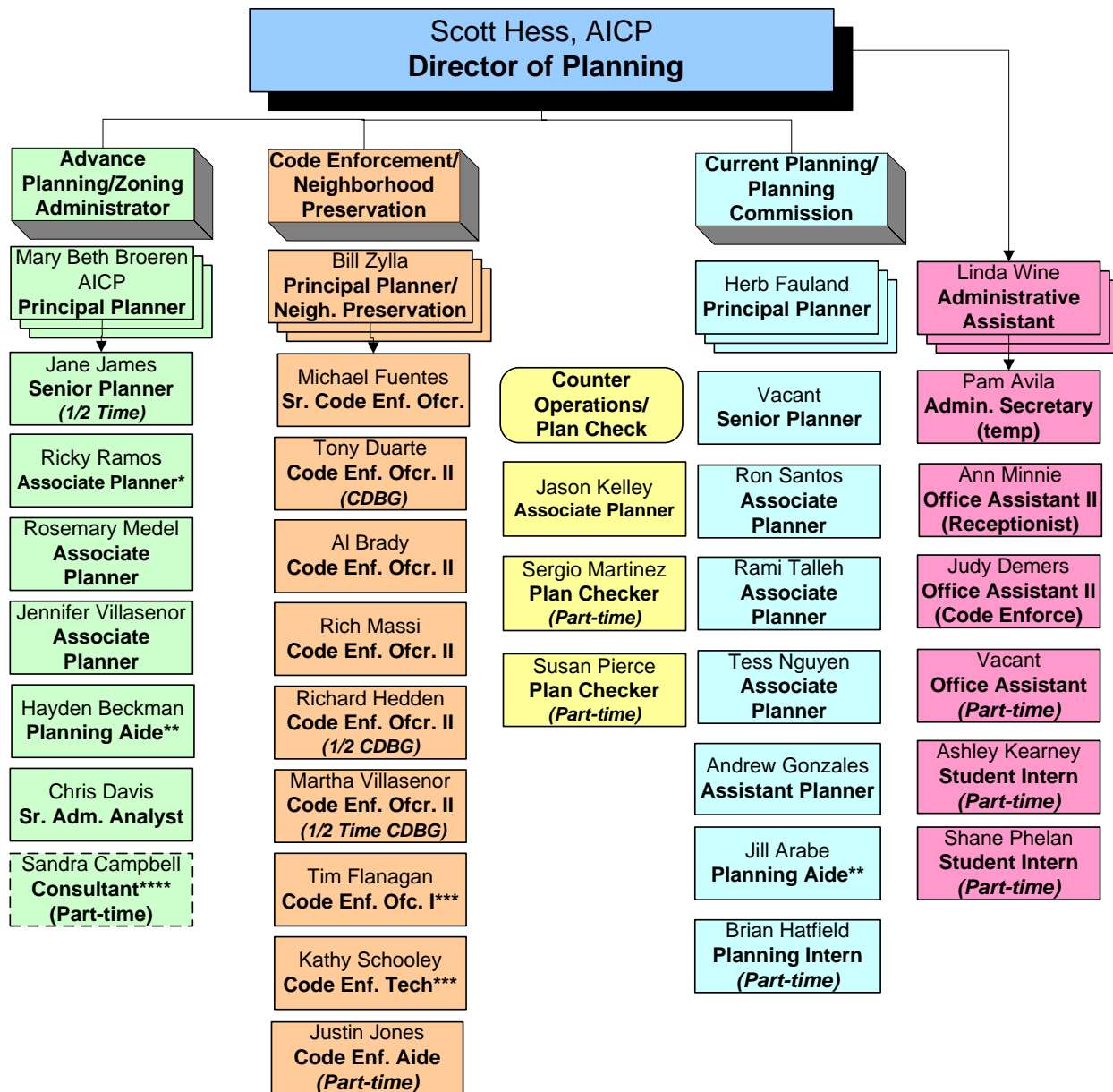
C. Code Enforcement/Neighborhood Preservation

The Code Enforcement Division works to maintain quality neighborhoods and inspects projects after construction to verify and maintain compliance with the Zoning Code.

H.B. PLANNING DEPARTMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL TABLE

November 2007



*Underfilled Senior Planner

** Underfilled Assistant Planner

***Underfilled Code Enforcement Officer II

****Extension of Staff for Brightwater Entitlements

PLANNING AS PART OF THE CITY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Huntington Beach City Council decided to undertake a strategic planning process to establish consensus about priorities for goals and projects for the next five years. The goals and projects identified through the strategic planning process can be used by the City Council and staff to guide decision making. With limited resources, knowing Council priorities will assist both the Council and staff in allocating resources in the operating and capital budget, identifying or clarifying City policies that relate to the goals and projects, utilizing staff, and evaluating progress of the City. The Strategic Plan is a global document, with goals and visions affecting multiple departments. The Planning Department will be involved in a support role in numerous goals that are laid out in the Strategic Plan.

Goals or Projects for which the Planning Department will have a lead role:

- Establish the vision and create a land use plan for reuse of critical parcels (including Beach and Edinger corridors) so that the next phase of community investment and improvement at that location can begin. To meet this goal, the Planning Department, in collaboration with the Economic Development Department, is in the process of performing a corridor study for Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue. Short term benchmarks include completing 4 community meetings for the corridor study by the end of 2007 and having a draft plan in early 2008. Mid to long term indications of success would include the initiation of two or more demonstration projects within one year of Specific Plan adoption on Beach or Edinger; implementation of the first phase of infrastructure improvement for Beach/Edinger project within five years of Specific Plan adoption and three or more properties with significant upgrades/façade improvements within 5 years.
- Create a plan for the use of surplus school property to ensure compatible uses with the surrounding neighborhood and meet community needs. To meet this end, the Planning Department would survey existing and potentially surplus school sites and compare the existing zoning to surrounding area. The Department would draft a "School Site Land Use Plan" focusing on the ultimate reuse of surplus school properties.
- Preserve the quality of our neighborhoods, maintain open space, and provide for the preservation of historic neighborhoods. One of the target projects would be to update the General Plan Historic and Cultural Resources Element. This would also entail an expanded and updated survey of the local landmarks list. Likewise, the



Code Enforcement division would continue to play a key role in ensuring the quality of neighborhoods through proactive enforcement and education of City Codes.

- **Study Form-Based Codes.** The Planning Department held a study session on Form-Based Codes in 2007.

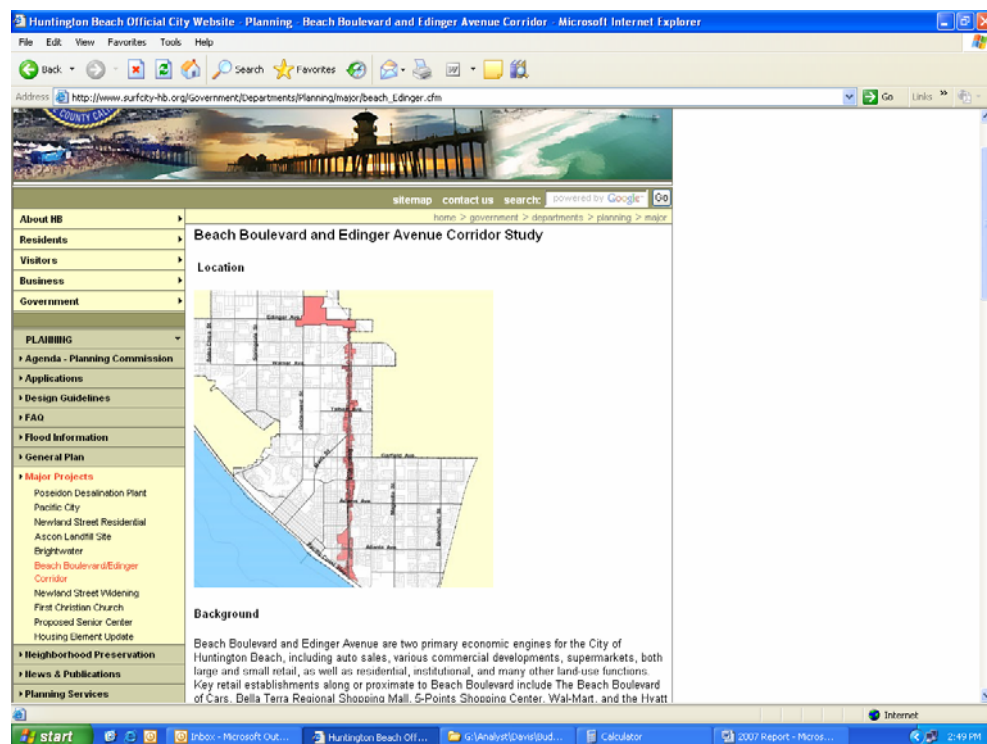
Goals or projects for which the Planning Department will play a key supporting role:

- **Build a New Senior Center.** The Planning Department is the lead department in processing the requisite environmental documentation and subsequent entitlements for this project. The Planning Department completed the Environmental Impact Report in 2007. The EIR and Conditional Use Permit were approved by the City Council in February 2008.
- **Improve the Efficiency of the Development Review Process.** The Planning Department has been involved in the review of the current development review process and will have a key role in any proposed changes to current policy. The Planning Department has been proactive in working to improve customer service and make the review process more efficient. Recent examples include promoting a “Second Opinion” service for applicants with concerns about their application review, instituting a free meeting with a project planner when the applicant submits their entitlement, publishing hand-outs that are available at the counter and on the website to assist potential applicants who are unfamiliar with the entitlement process, and reducing the fee by 50 percent for a Coastal Development Permit when processed as part of a Conditional Use Permit, Tentative Map or Variance. At a City Council Study Session, the Director of Planning also presented an overview of process improvements and identified high frequency applications where a reduction in fees could be appropriate. More information on this topic is contained later in this report.
- **Improve the City’s plan for funding and completing infrastructure needs and develop strategies for resolving critical infrastructure problems to preserve the physical foundation of the community and enable the community’s value to grow.** The Planning Department would assist the Public Works Department with the requisite environmental review for all affected projects. Likewise, any approved projects would be reviewed by the Planning Commission as part of the Capital Improvement Program.
- **Complete renewal of downtown and the waterfront: Complete The Strand, The Waterfront Master Plan, and Pacific City.** The Planning Department processed the Environmental Impact Reports and Entitlements for each of these properties, worked to shepherd their applications through the California Coastal Commission, and continues to assist during the construction phase. Information on each of these projects follows in the Major Projects section of this report. Planning Staff is also involved in the on-going effort to update the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Parking Master Plan that is being led by Economic Development.

COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Planning Department strives to facilitate development in the community by providing as much information as possible in an accessible manner. Likewise, the Department has also made efforts to inform City residents and businesses of development activities through an expanded public outreach effort. Key accomplishments in this area include:

- Publishing the General Plan Elements and Specific Plans on the Planning Department website.
- Making recent Environmental Impact Reports and Mitigated Negative Declarations available on the Planning Department website.
- Publishing a newsletter updating the progress of major developments and activities related to Planning.
- Publishing an Annual Report (including this one).
- Providing “How to” guides at the Zoning Counter and on-line for applicants to assist them through the entitlement process.
- Making the Planning Commission staff reports available on the Department website.
- Putting the main Planning applications on the website.



DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

In 2006, the City hired Zucker Systems to perform a review of the development process and make recommendations for improving the efficiency of the process while maintaining a high level of customer service. The study focused on all departments involved in the development process: Administration, Building & Safety, Fire, Public Works as well as Planning. The report identified 107 areas of potential improvement across all development departments. The Planning Department has taken an active role in implementing the recommendations. The following is an update of the ongoing Department improvements to address customer service, the development review process, and the Zucker Report. Many of these items have been implemented by staff and continue to be evaluated for efficiency and adequacy.

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

- The role of the project planner concept has been expanded to include managing the project from start to completion. This provides consistent oversight and management of a project from initial concept to entitlement to construction to final inspections and certificate of occupancy. The planner is also involved in future issues, if they arise at the project site, to provide necessary management of any issues
- The notification of the Planning Department's second opinion program has been expanded. The service is advertised on the Department's web site, notices have been displayed at the counter and in the 3rd floor display case. The planners have also been instructed to advertise this service when discussing an issue with customers at the counter.
- A comprehensive training of staff in areas of zoning code and subdivision requirements, and State Law (e.g., California Environmental Quality Act, Coastal Act, urban design principles, FEMA, and Uniform Building Code) has been instituted. A training session on a specific topic is scheduled at each weekly project review meeting and as necessary at each bi-weekly counter staff meeting. In addition, staff is encouraged to attend select college and APA sponsored planning and land use seminars.
- The amount of information available on the Planning Department's website has been expanded. These include the City's General Plan, Zoning Map, Specific Plans, and the Department's processing handouts. In addition we've added the Department Newsletter, Annual Report, entitlement applications, and Green Building information. A major projects page has also been added that includes a brief project narrative, location map, public documents such as Environmental Impact Reports or related studies, and contact information for the project planner.
- A full-time supervisor of counter operations and plan check is in place and is empowered to make decisions, find solutions and resolve conflicts. Up until a few months ago there was only a part-time supervisor.
- Instituted a customer sign-in process at the Planning and Zoning Counter for tracking of time spent assisting customers and type of requests for future reference. The information is used to monitor time, efficiency, and the number of customers served.

- Created a Customer Assistance/Thank You card to provide customers visiting the public counter the ability to contact staff for follow-up questions, request a second opinion on answers, and seek consultation with other development services departments.

ZUCKER REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Require large scale projects to have early project review – Ongoing
- Meet with City Council and Planning Commission - Ongoing
- Continue monthly publication schedule for newsletter - Ongoing
- Increase communication to other departments – Ongoing
- Develop in-house training program – Ongoing
- Provide adequate training budget – Approved in 2007/08 budget
- Address staff morale issues – Ongoing
- Develop Department Work Program – Ongoing
- Only accept quantitatively complete applications – Ongoing
- Revise Code Requirements letter/include appeal language– Completed
- Serve 95% of customers within 15 minutes – In progress
- Include direct phone numbers and email on business cards – Completed
- Revise DRB Membership – In progress
- Reaffirm DRB scope and authority– In progress
- Update DRB submittal guidelines– In progress
- Distinguish between design guidelines and requirements – Completed
- Revise requirements for DRB approval - In progress
- File on Planner's desk and distribute plans to other departments within two days of plan submittal - Completed
- Create management reports from CityView – In progress
- Evaluate management reports re: deadlines – In progress

- Counter Supervisor to perform plan checks – Completed
- Scale back duties of Counter Supervisor – In progress
- Review building plans in 5 days or less – In progress
- Review 95% of building plans within benchmarks – In progress
- Set goals for specific process reviews- Completed
- Set process goals for all reviews types - Completed
- Planning Director/Manager not to handle project cases directly - Completed

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS:

- Continue to establish timelines and expectations for staff performance of processing Administrative Permits as well as entitlements scheduled for the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission to monitor staff efficiency and process improvements.
- Continue to prepare additional staff reports for Planning Commission Study Sessions in compliance with the adopted Planning Commission Project Review Process. The process assists with the efficiency of decision making.
- Continue to update and add public informational handouts about the permit review process.
- Only one vacant planning position remains. The recruitment has begun.

Pre-Application Process:

- Continue offering appointments for application screening and submittals. By offering appointments, there is predictability in the amount of time needed to file applications. In addition, all departments could be invited to the meeting so the applicant can receive a thorough review of their application at time of submittal thereby reducing the possibility of an incomplete application file. There is no fee for this service.
- Continue to offer more opportunities for applicants to present their projects before the Development Assistance Team (DAT) in advance of filing an application. DAT provides preliminary recommendations to the applicant on a broader basis than previously utilized. In addition, written responses and staff's opinion of the proposal are expressed at these meetings.
- Continue to evaluate and update the application submittal requirements list for efficiency purposes. The list has been evaluated and will be redesigned to be more project specific (this was a recommendation by the Chamber of Commerce). It will

identify what items must be submitted at the various stages of review. The amount of information and detail required will be re-assessed to determine if it is excessive, adequate, or insufficient for processing purposes.

- In progress of drafting a processing schedule for distribution to the public which includes a schedule of Design Review Board, Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission hearing dates.
- In addition to providing applicants the basic application submittal requirements, staff distributes a copy of the City's plan check list based on the type of project. This provides the applicants the opportunity to better understand the standards that staff reviews for compliance with the code.

Application Processing:

- Continue to evaluate CityView for project tracking information between departments. There are currently two to three programs; look for one system.
- Utilize DAT for joint review by all departments within three weeks of application submittal and invite the applicant. This meeting could identify code issues, allow for solutions of issues, and discuss project conditions.
- Expand number of standardized templates for Planning Commission staff reports. This will improve efficiency and consistency between staff reports.
- Continue to evaluate internal review times of staff reports.

Customer service and process improvement are continuous. As the City continues implementing the Council adopted Strategic Plan Goals and improves the efficiency of the development review process, management staff will continue to foster a work culture that encourages creativity, teambuilding, process improvement, and quality customer service.

MAJOR PROJECTS

The statistics in the next section will illustrate the quantitative workload of the Planning Department. The following is a qualitative description of many of the major projects that the Department worked on this past year. Many of these projects have been multi-year efforts.

Pacific City

The Pacific City site is the last major parcel in the downtown area to be developed. It is a vacant thirty-one acre site that is bounded by Pacific Coast Highway, First Street, Huntington Street, and Atlanta Avenue. The developer, Makar Properties, originally purchased the property in 1998 with a goal of creating a development that added to the appeal of Huntington Beach as a tourist destination. In 2002 Makar submitted applications for a Tentative



Tract Map, Coastal Development Permit, Conditional Use Permit, Special Permit, and a Pacific City Conceptual Master Plan. The approved project is fulfilling the vision of the Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP) by providing a mix of visitor-serving commercial and residential uses to complement the downtown commercial core.

The existing site will be divided into three parcels. One of the parcels (17.2 acres) will be for residential condominium purposes and the other two parcels (4.12 acres and 6.47 acres) are for a commercial/retail/restaurant/entertainment/office/hotel development. Located along the



southern portion of the property is the proposed 250-room, eight-story hotel, which is compatible with the 12-story Waterfront Hilton hotel. A wide spectrum of visitor opportunities resulting from this project adds to the destination resort image the City has created. North of the commercial promenade are 516 residential units proposed in a mix of two, three and

four story buildings designed per requirements of the DTSP to be compatible with surrounding

residential development. The residential parcel will include a 2.03-acre Village Park/open space area dedicated for public usage. The project entitlements were approved by the City Council in June 2004. In 2005, the Planning Department completed mitigation monitoring – Archaeological, Biological and Site Remediation – for the site.

In 2007, the developer has been conducting mass grading, completing street improvements surrounding the site and installing underground utilities. Construction on the commercial garage is underway. The first phase of the residential project and the commercial project are slated to open in Fall 2009. The hotel is aiming for an early 2010 opening.

Beach Boulevard/Edinger Corridor Study

Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue are two primary economic engines for the City of Huntington Beach, including auto sales, various commercial developments, supermarkets, both large and small retail, as well as residential, institutional, and many other land-use functions. Key retail establishments along or proximate to Beach

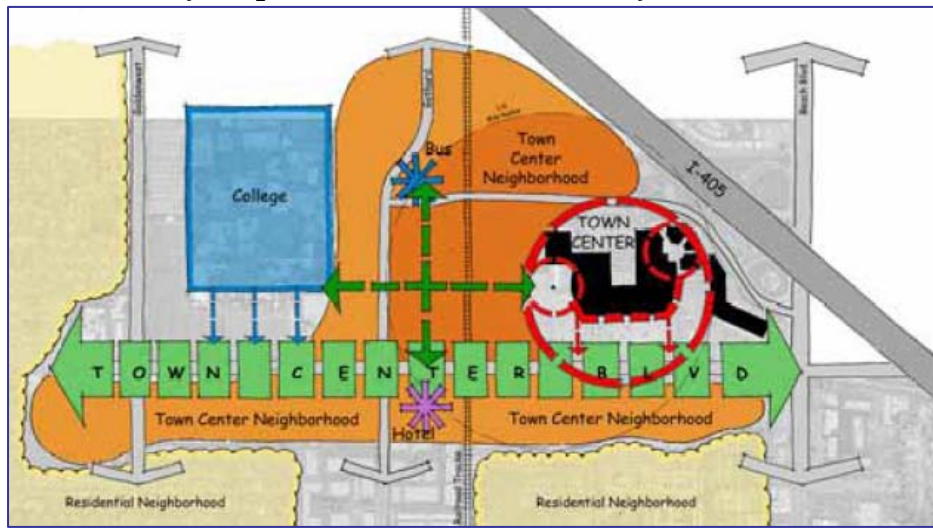


Boulevard include The Beach Boulevard of Cars, Bella Terra Regional Shopping Mall, 5-Points Shopping Center, Wal-Mart, and the Hyatt Regency Resort & Spa. Edinger Avenue includes Bella Terra and a number of retail centers.

It is the City's desire to enhance and maximize the potential of this major thoroughfare. Although the City has been able to improve economic opportunities along Beach Boulevard, this artery lacks the characteristics that provide identity and clarity of location, incorporating various nondescript strip commercial centers, a wide range of signage, and inconsistent landscaping. While individual establishments along the corridor have had various degrees of success, there is no synergy to the current process. Likewise, efforts to create a strategy for Edinger have not come to fruition.

In recent years, the City has made an effort to develop specific plans for key areas within the City to maximize their unique assets. This includes the Downtown Specific Plan to maximize the City's tourism potential and create a cultural magnet for residents and visitors alike, the Holly-Seacliff Specific Plan for a major residential development, and the McDonnell Centre Business Park Specific Plan.

In September 2006, the City Council approved a contract with a consultant, Freedman, Tung and Bottomley, to perform a revitalization study for the Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue corridors. The project



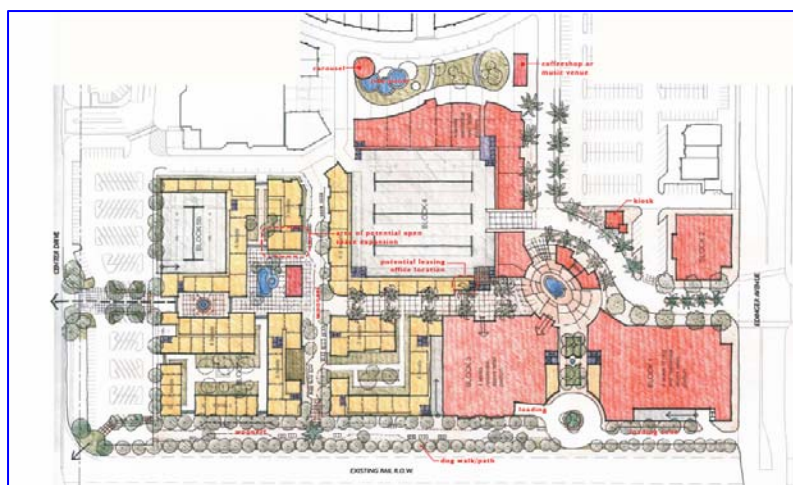
is intended to determine and implement a clear vision for growth and change along the Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue. The specific configuration that new public and private investment along the corridor will take will be determined by a planning process

involving city officials, citizens, stakeholders and city staff. Specifications to guide land use and development intensity, site layout, building design, site landscaping and signage will be detailed in the document created from this effort. Land use and development standards contained in a specific plan will be drafted to replace pre-existing zoning regulations, and to assist the community to more effectively attract investment and improve the evolving image and identity of the City.

The Planning Department and Economic Development Department held four community workshops in 2007. Additionally, the City Council approved an amendment to the contract with FTB to accelerate the Edinger Avenue workshop to take advantage of projects that are nearly shelf-ready. Two of these projects – Bella Terra Phase II and The Ripcurl – are highlighted later in this section. The amendment will also expand the analysis of traffic issues, which were a key area of concern at the community workshops. The City Council also approved a contract to perform an Environmental Impact Report for the Corridor Study.

The Village at Bella Terra (Formerly Bella Terra Phase II)

The proposed Village at Bella Terra project is located at 7777 Edinger Avenue – the former Montgomery Wards -- in the northern part of the City. It is immediately adjacent to Bella Terra, an approximately 777,000 square foot shopping center, which is owned by DJM, an affiliate of the applicant, Bella Terra Phase II



LLC. The applicant is proposing to develop a multi-level mixed use retail, office and residential development with approximately 840,190 square feet of total building improvements (commercial and residential) excluding parking. They have plans for approximately 500 to 700 units at 38 units per acre and approximately 158,000 square feet of retail and commercial space. The units would be both rental and ownership. They are also now evaluating a hotel component with up to 200 rooms. The Planning Department recently began work on the Environmental Impact Report and anticipates a draft for public review in the Summer of 2008.

The Ripcurl

This proposed project is located at the Southeast corner of Gothard Street and Center Avenue in the northern part of the City of Huntington Beach, across from Goldenwest College. The site is currently a small commercial mall. The applicant, Red Oak Investments, is proposing to ultimately develop up to 500 luxury residential units in five residential stories, located above approximately 15,000 square feet of street level retail and commercial uses. Off-street parking will be provided at grade and on two subterranean levels. Open space amenities will be included.



The Strand

In 1999, CIM Group proposed a large mixed-use development downtown. Bounded by Pacific Coast Highway, Walnut Avenue, Sixth Street, and the alley between Fifth and Main Streets, The Strand will include retail, restaurants, offices, and a 149-room hotel, for a total of 226,536 square feet, with a 411-space subterranean parking structure. This project will bring new life to the downtown area by adding an expanded commercial area with modern Mediterranean architecture. A public open-space terrace from the second floor of the hotel provides spectacular coastal views, and serves as an attractive destination for visitors to Huntington Beach.



In late 2002, the City Council approved the project, and it received final approval by the California Coastal Commission in January 2003. In 2004 the developer worked on the drawings for construction and also submitted utility plans. All existing underground utilities were relocated to the surrounding street system during

2005. The Design Review Board reviewed and approved the final details of the design in June 2006.

Construction is nearing completion and CIM Group will turn over the building shell to retail and restaurant tenants for tenant improvements in Spring 2008 with anticipated openings (hopefully) by Summer 2008. Joie de Vivre, who was signed last year to manage the hotel, recently announced the official name of the hotel –The Shorebreak Hotel – which is anticipated to open in Fall 2008. Other tenants include Urban Outfitters, RA Sushi, Johnny Rockets and Ben & Jerry's.

3rd Waterfront Hotel

Another project that will help to complete downtown's transformation is the 3rd Waterfront Hotel, which is planned to be located between the Hilton and Hyatt and would be about the same size as the Hilton. Current plans are for 200 guest rooms, ballrooms and conference facilities. The Coastal Commission has approved the concept for the hotel to be a one-hundred percent condominium hotel. The Robert Mayer Corporation is expected to submit applications



for the third and final hotel at the Waterfront Master Plan development in 2008 or 2009. Anticipated to be developed as a condominium hotel, but with amenities and facilities available to the general public, it will complement the existing accommodation inventory downtown and further strengthen the City as a destination location.

Brightwater Project

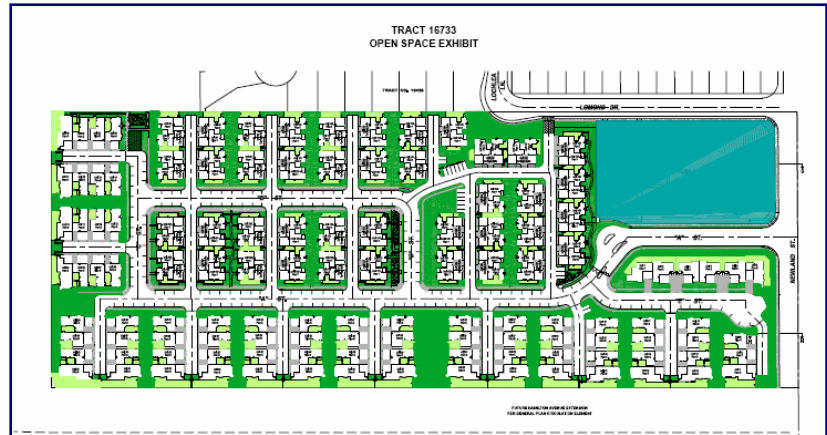
The City is in the process of annexing 105.3 acres of the upper bench portion of Bolsa Chica that will become a residential development. The development, named the Brightwater project and currently in unincorporated Orange County, has already been approved by the California Coastal Commission and the Orange County Board of Supervisors. Development standards are based upon the County's standards. The City was approached for annexation in order to provide better services. Brightwater will consist of 349 single-family units. Of the 105.3 acres, 67.9 is dedicated for residential development and 37.4 is preserved for habitat restoration. The Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) approved the annexation in November 2007, and the first phase of the residential



development, consisting of 23 homes, was annexed unto the City in December 2007. It is expected that the development will be build over the next several years. Entitlements to facilitate the annexation were approved by the City Council in October 2007.

Blue Canvass (formerly Newland Street Residential)

Located on a former oil storage tank site on the west side of Newland Street and terminus of Hamilton avenue, this residential project will consist of 201 units and a 2 acre park. Rough grading is complete; precise grading for the models and rough grade for the park is now in plan check. Plan check for architectural/building permit models and the first residential phase was submitted in early 2008. The developer, John Laing Homes, anticipates opening of the models in late Spring 2008 with the first phase of residential expected to be finished by late Fall 2008.



Parkside Estates

Approved by the City Council for 171 single family residences, and 8 acre-park and other open space amenities on 50-acres on the west side of Graham Street, south of Warner Avenue, the California Coastal Commission approved a scaled back version of the project in 2007. In November the Coastal Commission approved a land use plan with expanded wetlands, and fewer homes. The final plan will need approval by the Coastal Commission. Once approved, the significant infrastructure needs will require about one year to complete. Construction of the new homes is currently expected to start construction in late 2009/early 2010.



Senior Center

In November 2006, residents of the City of Huntington Beach approved Measure T with 51.1 percent. Measure T asked the following question:

“Shall a centrally located senior center building, not to exceed 47,000 square feet, be placed on a maximum of five acres of an undeveloped 14-acre parcel in the 356-acre Huntington Beach Central Park, generally located west of the intersection of Goldenwest Street and Talbert Avenue, between the disc golf course and Shipley Nature Center, following City Council approval of all entitlements and environmental review?”

The catalyst for the City to consider the subject location for the Senior Center was the availability of funds to construct a new building, as a result of an owner participation agreement for a downtown development. In addition, the City’s existing senior center is inadequate to meet current and future needs of residents. It is comprised of two buildings that total 14,000 square feet. The Senior Center building is proposed to be approximately 45,000 square feet and will house a multi-purpose, senior citizens center for recreation and social services. Access to the site will be from the intersection of Goldenwest Street/Talbert Avenue. Approximately 200 parking spaces will be provided for visitors and City vehicles.

The Planning Department completed the Environmental Impact Report in 2007. The Planning Commission approved the project on December 11, 2007, with conditions, based on findings that the project is compatible with the surrounding uses, complies with applicable codes, will not have detrimental impacts to residential uses in the vicinity, and is consistent with General Plan goals and policies. The project was approved by the City Council on appeal in February 2008.



Housing Element Update

The Housing Element is one of the seven State-mandated elements of the City’s General Plan and must be updated pursuant to California Government Code Section 65588 for the 2008-2014 planning period. The Housing Element identifies and assesses projected housing needs and provides an inventory of constraints and resources relevant to meeting these needs. Components of the housing element include: a housing needs assessment with population and household characteristics; identification of constraints to providing housing; an inventory of available sites for the provision of housing for all economic segments of the community; and a statement of goals, policies and programs for meeting the City’s housing needs. Study sessions on the draft Element were held with the Planning Commission, the Affordable Housing Ad Hoc City Council

Committee and the City Council in 2007. The document has been submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development for their review and comment.

Le Bard Park Environmental

The Planning Department, in collaboration with Community Services, is processing the requisite environmental documentation for the LeBard Park Phase II expansion. LeBard Park currently consists of three acres of developed parkland with turf, trees, picnic tables, benches, two tennis courts, and a tot lot. The City is proposing development of Phase II on two acres of property that the City leases from the Edison Company. After meeting with local homeowners and interested members of the public, the consensus is that the community would prefer open turf areas with trees and other vegetation to help screen the Santa Ana River. Staff, along with Nuvis, a professional landscape architect firm, have created a master plan based on comments received from the community and constraints due to the Edison Company lease. It is expected that the environmental documents will be available for public comment in 2008.

Circulation Element Update

The Planning and Public Works Departments are working on a comprehensive update to the General Plan Circulation Element, which provides the framework for the city's transportation network for vehicles, bicycles, equestrians and pedestrians. The citywide traffic model is being updated to better reflect current traffic patterns and volumes. In 2007, staff and the project consultants finalized the land use database and traffic counts for the project. In 2008, we anticipate a City Council study session, formation of a committee to review goals and policies and ultimately, public hearings to adopt the updated element.

PROJECTS ON THE HORIZON

Bolsa Chica Lowlands Annexation

In 2007, the City began the process of annexing the upper bench portion of Bolsa Chica as part of the Brightwater project. Subsequently, the City Council directed staff to analyze the possibility of annexing the remaining lowlands of Bolsa Chica. The Planning Department issued a Request for Proposals in 2008 for consultants to perform a feasibility study to analyze the fiscal, operational and implementation issues related to annexing the remaining portion of Bolsa Chica. The majority of land is owned by the State of California. There are approximately 1,500 acres, of which approximately 920 acres have been designated “Waters of the United States” by the Environmental Protection Agency. These waters are interspersed with oil roads, drilling pads, and other high ground within the Lowlands. The State of California Department of Fish and Game manages an approximately 300 acre State Ecological Reserve within the Lowland area, 175 acres of which have been restored to tidal influence, that contains an interpretive center and displays, walking trail and parking lots. In addition to the State owned property, which includes the Lower Bench of the Bolsa Chica Mesa, approximately 86 acres on the Huntington Mesa, just west of Seapoint Street, are earmarked for the future Harriett M. Wieder Regional Park to be owned and maintained by the County of Orange.

Historic Element Update

The Planning Department included funding in the fiscal 2007/2008 budget to update the Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the General Plan and to review and improve the list of historic landmarks. This project would help meet the Strategic Plan goal of preserving the quality of our neighborhoods, maintain open space, and provide for the preservation of historic neighborhoods. The Request for Proposals for the project will be released in Spring 2008.

Fee Schedule Update

On October 15, 2007, the City Council held a Study Session on Planning Department fees. Planning staff highlighted specific common entitlement applications that encompassed a broad range of uses that could be reduced for those uses whose review requires measurably fewer resources than the average time for that application as a whole. The City Council formally adopted the fee resolution on March 3, 2008. Subsequently, the City will be conducting a citywide cost recovery and fee study in 2008. This study will incorporate developer fees as well as user fees assessed by the Planning Department.

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

The following section reviews the accomplishments in 2007 of the Planning Department. A brief outlook for what is expected in 2008 is also provided for each section.

Counter Services:

- Received an estimated 9,920 (40/day average) phone calls and 10,600 (43/day average) walk-in inquiries
- Received 216 zoning and entitlement applications
- Performed 2,427 over-the-counter plan checks for zoning conformance
- Performed 1,387 plan checks for zoning compliance; 196 grading and 60 landscaping plans
- Processed 1,260 certificates of occupancy
- Issued 3 letters confirming property exemption from flood insurance
- Issued 25 zoning conformance letters
- Received over 780 (3/day average) calls inquiring about flood information
- Mailed approximately 15,000 flood information brochures to properties in the floodplain
- Received and answered 105 Citizen Inquiries from Administration
- Answered 192 e-mails received via the Planning Department website
- Conducted 14 counter staff meetings and reviewed 44 issues/topics

Entitlement Processing:

- Processed 28 applications to the Planning Commission and discussed 52 items at Study Session.
- Processed 71 applications to the Zoning Administrator.
- Processed 38 applications to the Design Review Board.
- Processed 26 Administrative Permits.
- Development Assistance Team - reviewed 41 issues or conceptual plans.
- Project Review Staff meetings – 53 meetings and reviewed 305 issues or entitlements.
- Processed 5 final parcel maps, 2 final tract maps and 7 Lot Line Adjustments.

2007 Applications Received

Type of Application	Quantity
Address Assignment	87
Administrative Permit	26
Appeals (PC & CC)	5
Categorical Exclusion	0
Certificate Of Compliance	2
Coastal Development Permit	20
Conditional Use Permit	49
Continuance	3
Design Review Board	36
Entitlement Plan Amendment	7
Environmental Assessment	7
Environment Impact Report	4
General Plan Amendment	3
General Plan Conformance	2
Initial Plan, Zoning Review	10
Limited Sign Permit	2
Local Coastal Program Amendment	1

Type of Application	Quantity
Lot Line Adjustment	6
Planned Sign Program	10
Preliminary Plan Review	2
Sign Code Exception	3
Site Plan Review	2
Special Permit	0
Specific Plan Review	1
Temporary Activity Permit	66
Temporary Sign Permit	194
Temporary Use Permit	5
Tentative Parcel Map	6
Tentative Tract Map	1
Time Extension	18
Variance	11
Zoning Compliance Letter	58
Zoning Map Amendment	1
Zoning Text Amendment	4
Total 2007 Applications	647

6 Year History – Entitlement Applications

Application Type	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Avg. No. of Applications
Address Assingment	37	63	95	98	77	87	76.17
Administrative Permit	7	7	21	18	22	26	13.25
Appeals (PC & CC)	0	1	4	8	4	5	3.67
Certificate of Compliance	3	2	2	0	1	2	1.67
Coastal Development Permit	32	28	17	20	19	20	22.67
Conditional Use Permit	72	65	52	45	48	47	54.83
Continuance	4	3	5	1	4	3	3.33
Design Review Board	56	62	51	36	45	36	47.67
Entitlement Plan Amendment	14	11	12	8	7	7	9.83
Environmental Assessment	13	10	12	8	9	7	9.83
General Plan Amendment	3	3	4	3	1	3	2.83
General Plan Conformance	1	1	2	5	4	2	2.50
Initial Plan/Zoning Review	10	31	26	17	6	10	16.67
LCP Amendment	0	1	1	1	0	1	0.75
Limited Sign Permit	0	2	2	0	1	2	1.00
Lot Line Amendment	9	13	8	15	15	6	11.00
Preliminary Plan Review	2	6	3	1	3	2	2.83
Planned Sign Program	8	6	21	13	13	10	11.83
Sign (temporary)	192	186	163	138	126	194	166.50
Sign Code Exception	7	7	7	4	5	3	5.50
Site Plan Review	1	3	2	1	1	2	1.67
Special Permit	7	0	2	2	2	0	2.17
Specific Plan Review	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.17
Temporary Activity Permit	53	68	72	70	52	66	63.50
Temporary Use Permit	0	0	0	1	2	6	1.50
Tentative Parcel Map	10	9	9	5	5	7	7.50
Tentative Tract Map	4	2	4	1	2	1	2.33
Time Extension	19	17	17	9	8	18	14.67
Variance	15	24	10	8	13	11	13.50
Zoning Compliance Letter	27	59	36	35	37	58	42.00
Zoning Amendment (Text & Map)	9	4	6	6	11	5	6.83
Total	578	631	571	479	544	647	575.00

*Permit Streamlining, implemented in 2004, allowed many projects that had previously required a conditional use permit to be processed as an administrative permit by Planning staff.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

In 2007, the Code Enforcement/Neighborhood Preservation Division continued its efforts in maintaining and improving the City's quality of life through education, communication, and enforcement actions. Throughout the year, the division opened 3,029 new cases, conducted 6,058 inspections, and resolved 3,033 cases, with a voluntary compliance rate of 97.75%.

Overview of 2007 Code Enforcement activity:



Received/returned over **19,900 phone calls**. This includes receiving and responding to complaints, follow-up with violators and complainants, and providing general information and resource referrals to the public about Code Enforcement and Neighborhood Preservation



Initiated **2,289 proactive cases** to address violations observed by officers before receiving a complaint from citizens, and responded to **787 service requests** from residents to address code enforcement violations



Conducted **502 on-site visits** with property owners, explaining code requirements and providing resource referrals to assist them in their effort to maintain their properties to the City's standards



Issued **645 Notices of Violation** to encourage voluntary compliance and **69 citations** for non-compliance when voluntary compliance was not achieved



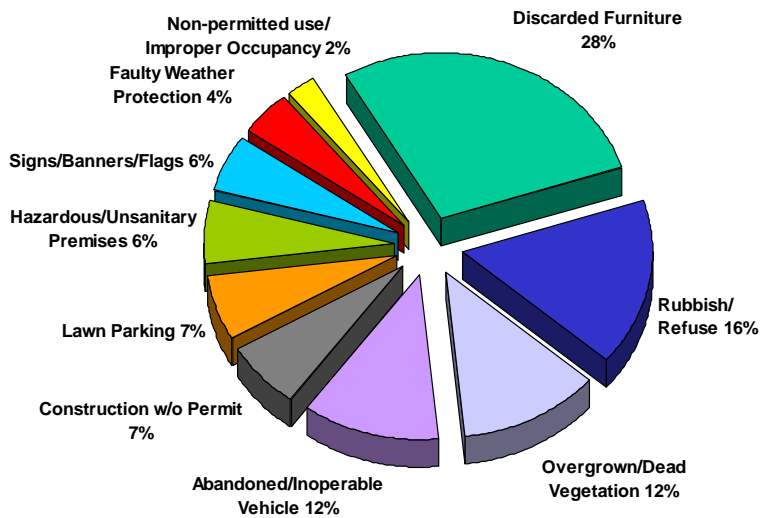
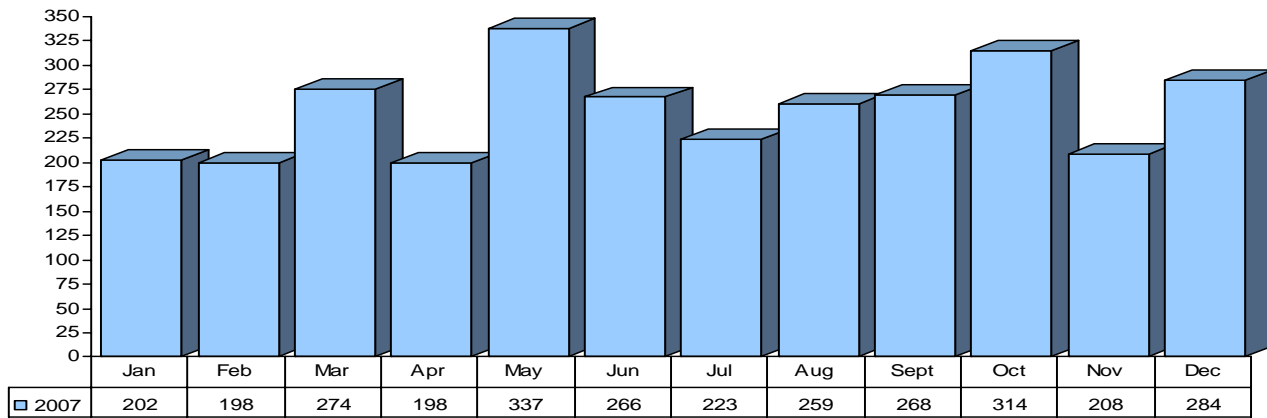
Coordinated efforts with the Public Nuisance Task Force to address **37 nuisance properties** with the cooperation of Police, Fire, Building, Public Works, and the City Attorney's Office.

On average:



- ✓ Gained compliance and successfully resolved violations within **39 days**
- ✓ Responded to **73%** of all complaints in **one day or less**.
- ✓ Inspected **75%** of all complaints **within 48 hours**.
- ✓ Completed the first inspection **within 4.8 days** from the initial complaint

12 Month Code Enforcement Case History:



Violation	Total Cases
Discarded Furniture, Equipment, Appliances	559
Rubbish/Refuse	322
Overgrown/Dead Vegetation	238
Abandoned/Inoperable Vehicles	229
Construction w/o permit	130
Lawn Parking	130
Hazardous/Unsanitary Premises	116
Banners/Flags/Signs	113
Faulty Weather Protection	87
Non-permitted Use/Improper Occupancy	49

Code Enforcement Special Projects:

City-Wide Housing Survey:

Code Enforcement staff conducted a city-wide housing condition survey from February to August. The survey examined exterior and publicly visible areas of units, determining overall condition by a point system. Units were rated on several features, such as roof, paint, and landscaping, and assigned ratings of 1 (good), 2 (fair), and 3 (poor). Feature scores were combined and an overall rating assigned. Of 55,130 units rated, 91% were categorized as good, 8% fair, and 1% poor.

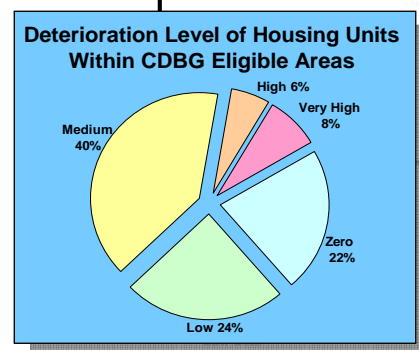
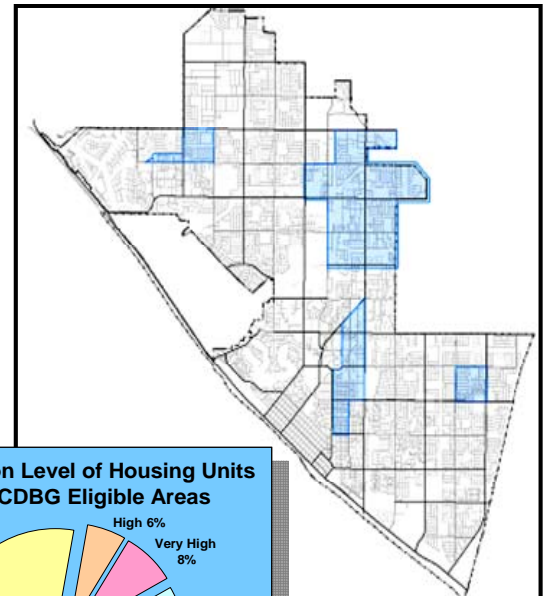
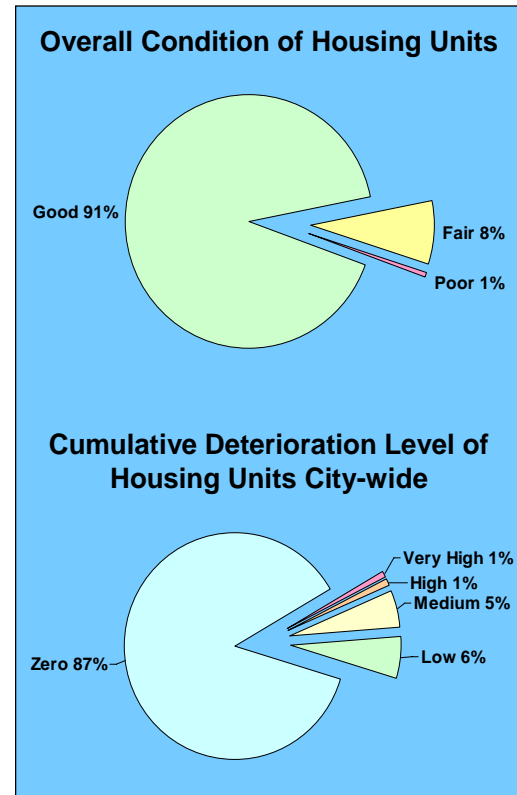
Deteriorating Area Survey:

During the survey, staff also identified deteriorated areas based on violations of the Uniform Housing Code. This assisted in mapping areas of the City meeting U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines to use Community Development Block Grant funds for code enforcement activities. Units were graded and classified into deterioration categories: Zero, Low, Medium, High, and Very High. The cumulative results revealed 93% of housing units showed either Zero or Low signs of deterioration, 6% showed Medium to High levels, and 1% showed Very High levels of deterioration.

Areas Eligible for CDBG Funded Enforcement and Preservation Activities:

From this deteriorating area survey, staff determined four geographical areas that met the criteria for a deteriorating area and met the national objective of serving a low-moderate income population. See adjacent map for general boundaries and locations of these four areas.

Of the units with these areas, 78% were found to have some level of deterioration, specifically, 24% had a low level of deterioration, 40% had a medium level of deterioration, 6% had a high level of deterioration, and 8% had a very high



level of deterioration. While these four areas comprise approximately 20% of the City's total housing units, these areas were responsible for over 42% of all code enforcement activity and over 51% of all code violations recorded city-wide. These areas will become the focus of increased code enforcement and neighborhood preservation efforts to improve the quality of life and the condition of housing within these neighborhoods.

Examples of Common Code Enforcement Violations Observed:

Parking on front lawn



Discarded equipment – rubbish



Pool visibility

